



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

November 2002

## REAL RESULTS FOR REAL PEOPLE:

### A Record of Achievement

The Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services are responsible for the nation's array of nutrition assistance programs—a collection of programs that together provide a safety net to help the most vulnerable in our society meet their food needs. FNCS Under Secretary Eric M. Bost explains that “my goal for these programs is to sustain and continue their long history of helping families and individuals to secure a nutritious diet and build on this success with targeted improvements in three areas – increasing program access, promoting better eating habits, and strengthening stewardship of taxpayer dollars.



“As we approach the mid-point of the George W. Bush Administration's first term in office, it is time to take stock of our accomplishments. I am proud to report that while there is more to do, we have already achieved *real results for real people* across the Nation.”

### ENSURING ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

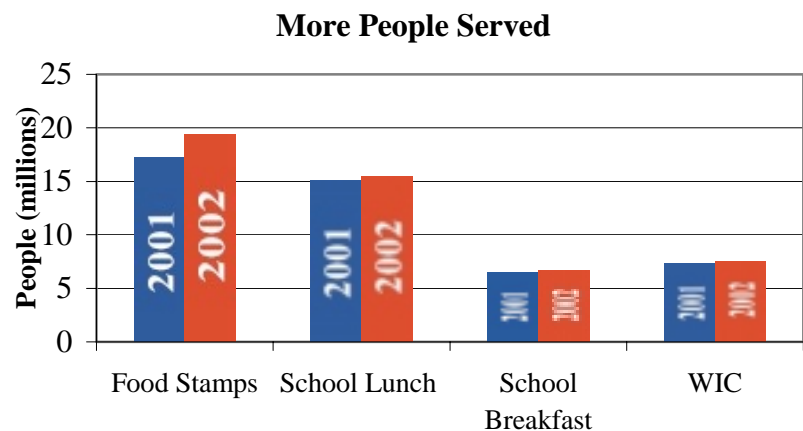
#### Sustained Commitment to the National Nutrition Safety Net



- Led USDA in reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program, securing a package that adds \$6.4 billion in new funding to nutrition assistance programs over a 10-year period. Successfully advocated for restoration of food stamp eligibility to legal immigrants after 5 years – a critical step in improving assistance for those who face hunger and in restoring fairness and equity for immigrants.
- Spearheaded an inclusive effort to identify program improvements to pursue during the upcoming Child Nutrition and WIC Program reauthorization that will occur in FY 2003. A nationwide series of nine outreach sessions generated recommendations from approximately 700 groups and individuals.
- Worked with Congress to secure an increase of over \$400 million for WIC—the largest ever dollar increase—in support of the Administration's effort to target scarce discretionary resources to programs proven effective.

## Improved Access to Food and Nutrition Programs

- Secured increases in the major nutrition programs: compared to a year ago, nearly 2 million more people receive food stamps, over 300,000 more children eat a free or reduced price school lunch, nearly 200,000 more children eat a school breakfast, and more than 150,000 more people participate in WIC.



- Distributed an unprecedented volume of commodities purchased in support of agriculture markets through the commodity assistance programs. The value of bonus commodities—largely fruits and vegetables—distributed through the Emergency Food Assistance Program to supplement the diets of low-income Americans tripled between 2000 and 2002 – rising to nearly \$290 million.
- Launched a nationwide initiative to promote children’s access to nutritious meals and snacks when school is not in session. Promoting the availability of summer feeding programs is critical, since only about 3 million low-income children currently receive program meals during the summer, while over 15 million receive them during the school year. *Hunger doesn’t take a summer vacation.*
- Mobilized teams in wake of September 11 terrorist attack to ensure continued program access to affected families. Emergency food stamps provided \$3.75 million in benefits to over 32,000 people in New York City alone.

## PROMOTING HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

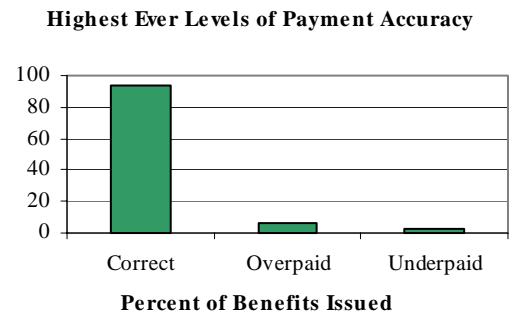


- Launched “Breaking the Barriers,” an initiative to support and motivate Americans to make concrete improvements in their diets and physical activities in support of the President’s *HealthierUS* initiative.
- Expanded efforts to combat childhood obesity with the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ campaign by distributing nearly 9 million new educational resources to schools, WIC clinics, and Food Stamp offices throughout the country.

- Partnered with the National Dairy Council to foster healthy nutrition environments in schools through *Changing the Scene*, an action kit developed in consultation with nutrition, health and education groups.
- Promoted increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, securing agreement with the National 5 A Day Partnership to pursue collaborative strategies with USDA. Nutrition assistance programs provided over \$7 billion to support fruits and vegetable consumption among low-income children and families in fiscal year 2001.
- Issued new standards to improve nutrition services for WIC participants nationwide, helping State agencies benchmark the quality of their nutrition services, identify areas needing improvement, and assess and encourage positive changes.

## IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP OF FEDERAL FUNDS

- In delivering \$15.5 billion in benefits in 2001, achieved the highest ever level of food stamp payment accuracy. Overpayments were reduced to less than 6.5 percent of all benefits issued and underpayments were reduced to 2.2 percent, for a 2001 combined error rate of 8.66 percent.
- Since FY 2001, USDA has collected over \$14 million in sanctions from 7 States for unacceptably high payment errors – more than has ever been collected in the history of the food stamp program.
- Achieved a clean financial statement for the third consecutive year, in support of the President's initiative to improve financial management across government.
- Set records for collection of delinquent recipient debt through the Treasury Department's debt collection programs. More than \$500 million has been collected since FNS began participating in 1992.



## PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

- Acted on commitment to secure a highly qualified and diverse leadership team: women and minorities filled 9 out of 12 recent appointments to senior FNCS leadership positions. Nearly two-thirds of the entire FNS senior leadership team is women or minorities.
- Continued development of FNCS employees to succeed to positions of leadership through the FNS Leadership Institute. Over 40 employees have completed the program since its founding in 1999. A recent review found that the Institute's components, when benchmarked against best practices, approach the "state-of-the-art" for comparable employee development efforts.
- Worked toward a more diverse workforce for the future through the 1890 and HACU Scholars Programs. Currently, FNCS sponsors 5 scholars from the 1890 program, and 3 scholars from the HACU program.

For more information about USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, visit the mission area's website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fncs/>. For information about Federal nutrition assistance programs, contact the Food and Nutrition Service Communications Staff at 703-305-2286, by mail at 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302, or on the web at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/>.

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